



## Nunivak, 1899

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An island, off Western Alaska, in the Bering Sea. It is the second largest island in the Bering Sea. Fogbound most of the year, Nunivak is covered with low vegetation and has a small native population engaged in hunting and fishing. Reindeer and musk oxen have been introduced as part of a national wildlife refuge there. The island was discovered in 1821 by Russian explorers.

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Builder: William H. Birch and Company, San Francisco

Cost: \$32,620

Commissioned: 1 May 1899

Decommissioned: 1901

Disposition: Sold

Length: 207'

Beam: 36'

Draft: 2' 6"

Displacement: 486 tons

Propulsion: Compound-expansion steam engine, stern paddle wheel

Performance:

Max:

Economic:

Deck Gear:

Complement:

Armament: Probably none

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## History:

The *Nunivak* was a stern-paddle wheel river boat built for service on the Yukon River by William H. Birch and Company in San Francisco. She was launched on 23 June 1898. She was placed in commission on 1 May 1899 and was ordered towed to Seattle by the cutter *Rush*. The cutters departed San Francisco on 6 May but anchored in Humbolt Harbor as the *Nunivak* was "leaking badly, hog chains and towline parted. Oakum spewed out of seams." After some repairs the cutters departed for Seattle, arriving there on 24 May 1899. They departed Seattle on 10 June 1899 bound for Port Townsend. They arrived at St. Michael, Alaska on 6 July 1899.

The *Nunivak* was ordered to be put up for sale on 3 May 1901, after serving less than two years. She was sold to W. D. Hofius and Company, Seattle, for a paltry \$5,000.

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## Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

Donald Canney. *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790-1935*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995.

U.S. Coast Guard. *Record of Movements: Vessels of the United States Coast Guard: 1790 - December 31, 1933*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934; 1989 (reprint).

